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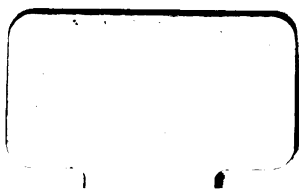
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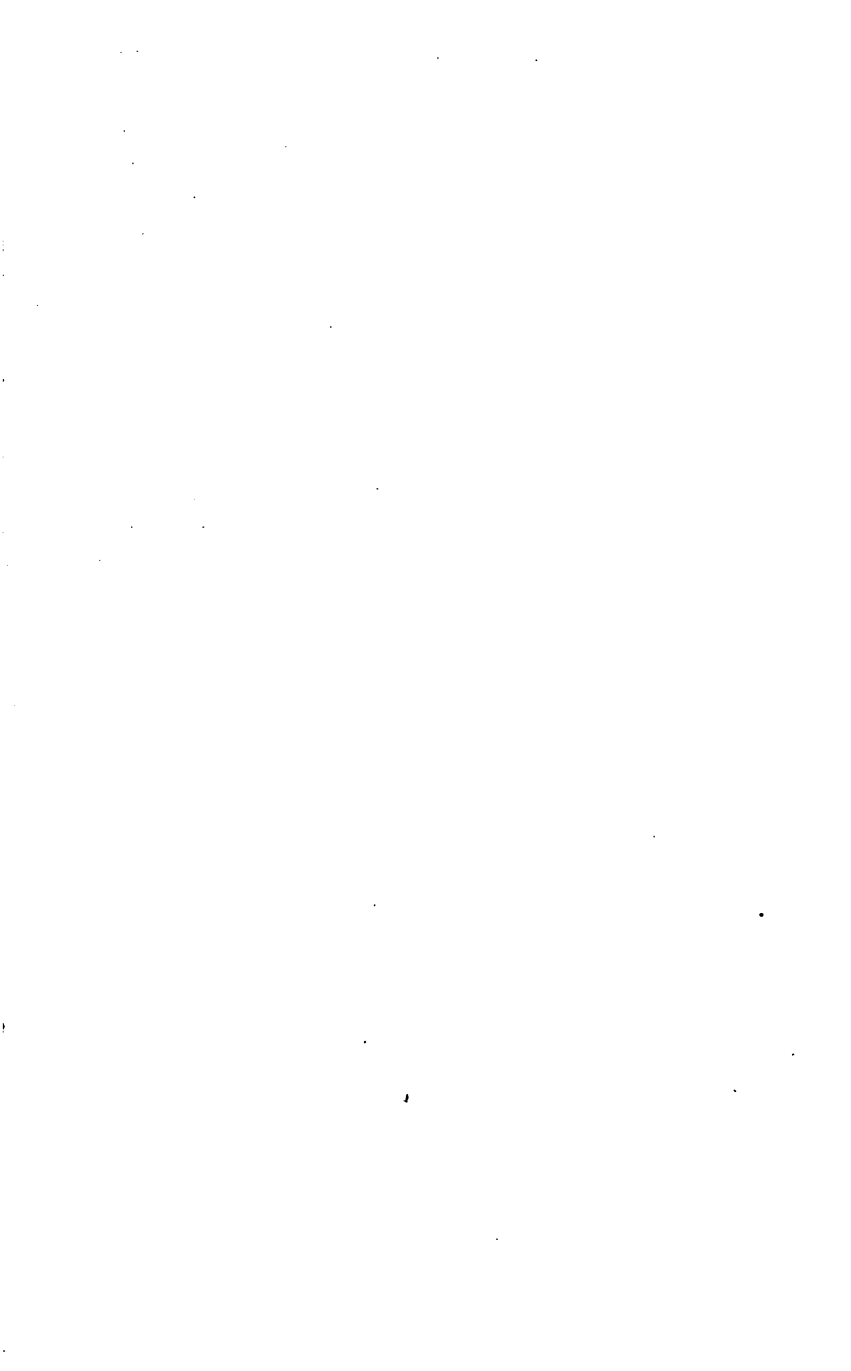


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EARTH AND NEW EARTH



EARTH AND NEW EARTH

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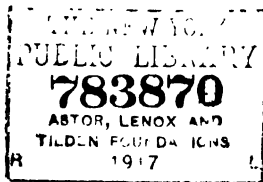
CALE YOUNG RICE

AUTHOR OF "PORZIA," "AT THE WORLD'S HEART," "FAR
QUESTS," "YOLANDA OF CYPRUS," "COLLECTED
PLAYS AND POEMS," etc.



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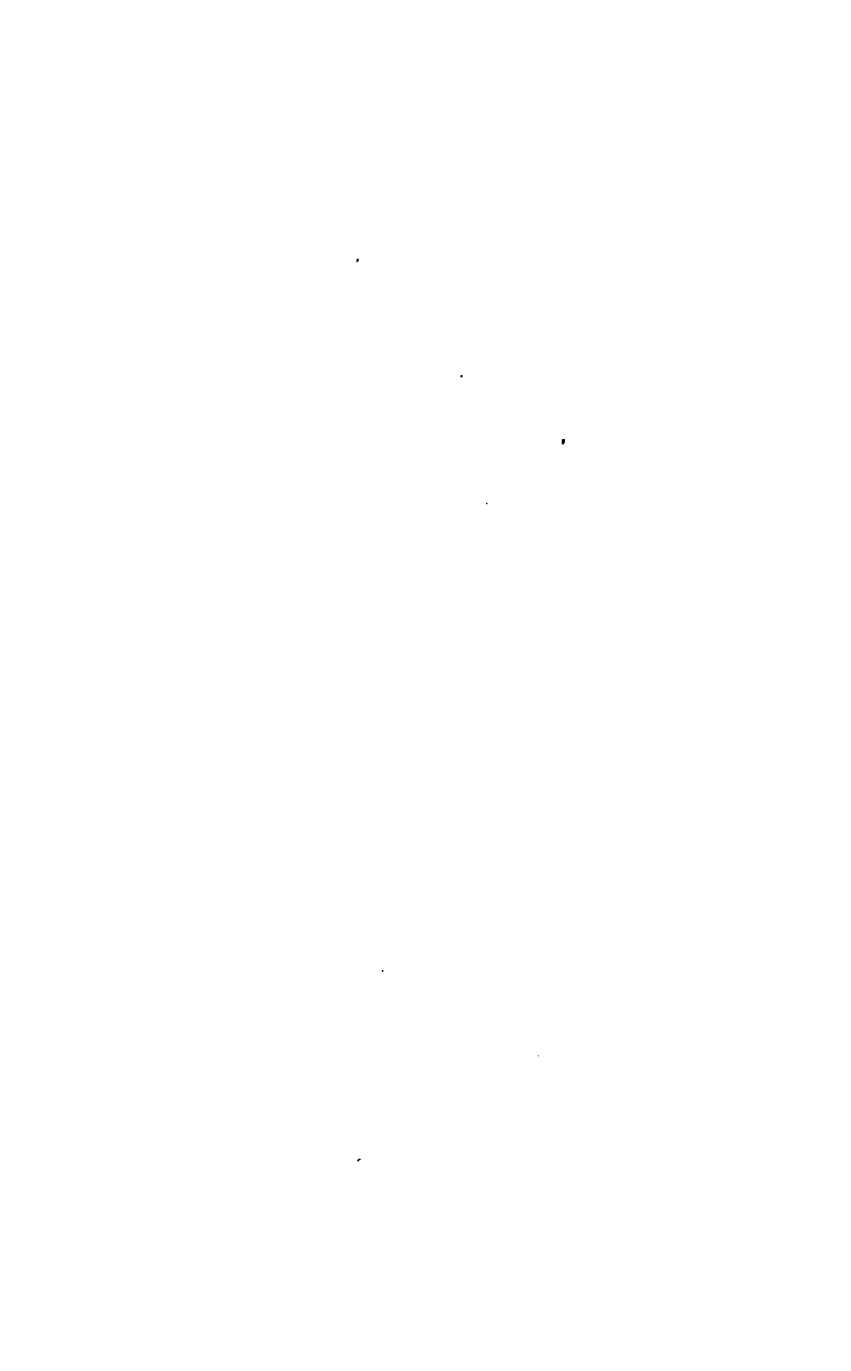
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CALE YOUNG RICE

ROYAL
DUTCH
YACHT

To
PRESIDENT WOODROW WILSON

WHOSE WISDOM AND PATIENCE HAVE
SO NOBLY SERVED THE IDEALS OF
HUMANITY AND WORLD-CITIZENSHIP



PREFACE

The first poem in this volume is permitted to stand as it appeared in the *Century Magazine* soon after the outbreak of the War. The second but re-expresses such sympathies as must pave the way to any prospect of world-citizenship. The third, a drama in one act, has Militarism—here “early” Prussian—as its abhorrence.

Other poems touching on the War have been placed elsewhere in the volume—which needs no further comment, unless I may express a hope that English poetry, so often hospitable to alien verse-forms, may also adopt that of the Japanese *hokkai*—the spirit and method of which I have sought to reveal, in examples of my own, under “Poetic Epigrams.” For the art value of the *hokkai*—its antagonism to the obvious—is a quality which all true literature must increasingly seek.

CALE YOUNG RICE.

Louisville, Ky., Dec., 1915.

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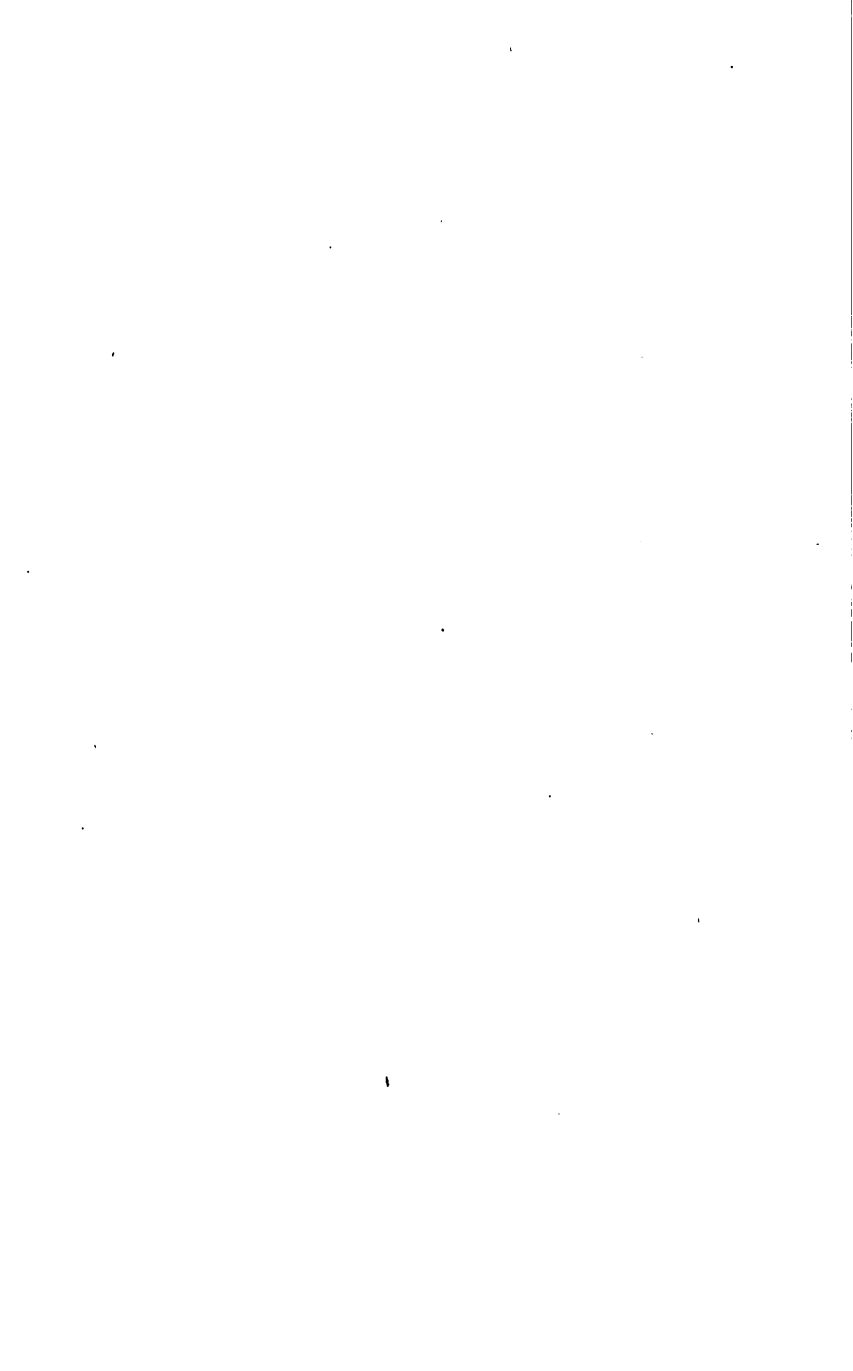
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EARTH AND NEW EARTH

PRINCIP

(The assassin of the Archduke Ferdinand)

Look at him there, a lad of nineteen years,
Slipping along the street with Slavic tread:
A moment, and from out his pistol's mouth
Shall leap the spark to set a world in flames.
For with the red death of a royal duke
The infinite tangle of a continent
Of immemorially warring peoples
Is kindled, and thro millions of calm breasts
The old race hatred runs. Austria reft,
Knowing the shot was at her feudal heart,
Flashes from out her molten indignation
A word that wakes the wild Caucasian urgency
Of Slavdom, ever swelling toward the West.
And Evolution's endless tragedies—
The friction fostered by uncounted kings,
The ancient war-cries that ring still in the blood

With timeless memories of rape and slaughter,
Inheritances, bred deep in the bone,
Of battling tongues and creeds and cruelties,
Of ruined homes, wrecked loves, and razed delights,
These and a thousand scorns and dark contempts
And hatreds, heirlooms of long ignorance,
Flare up into one frenzied thirst for war!

Princip, Princip, lad of the nineteen years,
Was it the finger of God that pulled your trigger
And loosed the avalanches of destruction
With a blind bullet of predestination?
Was it of God, who found His upward way
To some world-aim thwarted by all the mesh
And fever of impenetrable passions?
A hundred times within one haunted week
The scales of Destiny hung even:
Who weighed them down to War? was it our God?
Who spoke into the Teuton veins a faith
That the inexorable hour had rung
To face the Russian horror, and, at last,

By letting their own blood, relieve their hearts
Of the long warward strain that pride and fear
And pent world-hunger kept so peril-taut?
Who used the living enmity of France,
Bidding her stretch an oath of dark allegiance
Across Germanic borders to the Slav,
And plight a fearful or revengeful troth
To the wild Muscovite, in whose vast breast
A consciousness, perchance, of low estate
Is the dim whip that drives him west to freedom?
And England, with her greed, for good or ill
Girdled about the globe, and with her pride
And dominance of empire thundering
From ships on every sea, who flung *her* heart,
A-quest for peace, yet with a secret sense
That now her dreaded foe might be struck down—
Who flung *her* heart upon the bloody fields?
Princip, with nineteen years, can you not tell?

Is God in this? or was *His* Immanence
O'erwhelmed by atavistic Nature's surge

Up from the core of earth? Are East and West,
From Asia to young Yukon, swept by winds
Of war into this crucible of time,
To emerge after long fumes of pain and horror
More nearly fused to one humanity?
Or has void Chance, on which was builded up
The babel of our boasted civilization,
Betrayed us as we grasped toward the stars?
Can He, the Alchemist of the Universe,
Pour blood and burning tears and misery
And waste and famine out upon the earth,
Yet in a year, or in a yoke of years,
Transmute them into human betterment?
Or does intemperable fatality
Strain now the heart-strings of a continent
To breaking, and its mind to mad unfaith?
Princip, God's tool or Hell's, can you not tell?

“Autocracies shall go and Armaments
And that peace-murdering trade, Diplomacy!”
Such the cry is, Princip. And shall your blow,

Your petty, obsessed, patriotistic blow,
The last of the innumerable that ages
Have struck against the ancient iron gates
Of Tyranny—shall yours avail at last?
Or shall steel yet intrench the happiness
Of nations, not far mightier common-weal?
And since men seize at last, with wan clairvoyance,
The vision of a World-State shaping dim
Upon the horizon of their misery,
Is it mirage, desert delusion, dream,
Born not of possibility but pain?
Or does in truth the misty dome arise,
Already shadowed forth by their desire,
Of a World-Parliament's protecting peace,
And in it the one universal right
Of *HUMAN WELFARE* graven high, to guide
Their vast deliberations—and to link
At last with brave and noble assent to Law
The nations bruted now by bloody Might?
Princip, with nineteen years, can you not tell?

EARTH AND NEW EARTH

Before the winds of War awoke
And broke with raving strife
Over a world that lay at rest
Under a calm peace-life,
I sat beside a shimmering sea
Whose tides around me rang,
And, gloriously, to Memory,
My fair soul-mistress sang:

*So much of the earth I have loved, dear God, so much of
the wondrous earth,
That when I lie beneath its sod I shall not feel a dearth
Of beauty there, or of joy there, of marvellous delights,
Since I shall bring unto its breast a million rapture
sights.*

*For I have gathered its glories up, from my own low
hearth-side*

*To where Himalayas, high above belief, to heaven ride.
There's not a sea but has lent to me sunset, moonrise, or
dawn,*

*And oh, the cities of men that thro my ardent eyes have
gone.*

*The cities of men !—fair Honolulu, by her irised reefs,
Where younger West meets older East in dimly blent
beliefs,*

*Till each can read, with a strange heed, the vaster
mysteries,*

*That out of human hopes have sprung, o'er continents
and seas.*

*Or Yokohama, with Fuji to the southward, like a throne
Some Buddha has deserted for a shrine less high and lone,
And where a folk, long under the yoke of isolation's
dream,*

*Rise up and scatter the centuries, at a new vision's
gleam.*

*Or, thro pagoda-towering gates of secret vague Peking,
I've seen old China drifting out, new China surging in.
Stern men of state I have watched await at a Republic's
womb*

*To learn if Freedom yet may forth be brought, to lift
their doom.*

*Then India, in her mystic trance of deities so strange
And immemorial, I have seen half-tremble, as if change
Almost had come, like a dim drum that beat across her
sea*

Of resignation to this life's sad unreality.

*Oh, running flame of a new desire! Beside the pyramids
I have beheld it sweep the eyes of men who lift their lids
To Mecca or to Jerusalem, or to no shrine beyond
That of a hope Some Help will bind all hearts with a
sure bond.*

*Thro Europe I have beheld it run, a little lonely flame
Of brotherhood—or wild unrest, with many an anarch
name.*

"Let us be one, life's every son, not lord"—it said—

"nor slave ;

*But men with an equal share in earth, our mother,
which God gave !"*

*"Let us be one !" And ever the land I love above all
lands*

*Has swiftly heard the immortal word, and reached her
bounteous hands*

*To every man, tho, with a ban, from shores accurst he
came,*

*And on his brow has stamped anew humanity's great
name.*

*So much of earth I have loved, dear God, so much of the
valiant sphere*

*That bears us to our destiny, on wings we cannot hear,
So much of earth and the radiant birth upon it of new
dreams,*

*That sometimes as the living heart within Your Breast
it seems.*

EARTH AND NEW EARTH

Thus did I sing, with winds a-ring
Around me. Then there came
Wild-footed War, running amuck
With madness none could tame,
Among the nations that so long
Had sought for brotherhood,
And that now in their frenzy saw
No safety save in blood.

Then sudden the spirit of all love
Was lost, all hope went down;
Within a wild red flood of hate
I saw the world's soul drown.
And, in the frothing element,
There swam, instead, the beast
Man was and is and shall be till
He takes Law for his priest.

All in a madness was it done!
And memory—there slain—
Within me rotted like a corpse
That in the sun has lain.

Till where beauty had been there swarmed
The maggot of despair,
Sending its stench of uselessness
Into my soul's sick air.

But only a little while 'twas so,
For faith—I know not why—
Faith—tho enfouled by crimes of fate—
Comes back into the sky.
Yes, comes again, and did—to heal
With its immortal wind
This darkest wrong that man has borne,
Or deed that he has sinned.

And so I sing again, dear God: *So much of the
wondrous earth*
*I've loved that when I lie in it I shall not feel a dearth
Of beauty there, or of joy there, of marvellous delights,
Or of Thy deep divine desire to set all grief to rights.*

GERHARD OF RYLE



*Saint Francis, Saint Lutgarde,
And sweet Saint Margaret,
Saint Gertrude, and Ludwine,
And gentle Saint Colette,
They never shed the heart-blood
Of bird, man, or beast;
And a warrior, tho' great on earth,
In heaven shall be least.*

CHARACTERS

CONRAD . . . *Militant Archbishop of Cologne*
GERHARD OF RYLE . *Architect of the great Cathedral*
GERDA *His wife*
URSULA *A girl, their servant*
RUPERT . . . *A Knight in Conrad's Council*
SOLDIERS OF CONRAD

GERHARD OF RYLE

TIME.—Circa 1295 A. D.

SCENE.—*The chief room in the house of Gerhard, with a door and windows opening directly on the place of the unfinished Cathedral. Its walls and ceiling are of plaster and of stained oaken beams, which are grotesquely carved about a massive smouldering fireplace, right.*

On a tall rest to the left and back is a drawing of the Church's sublime façade: before which is a table with architectural implements together with an old sword. Chairs and chests also are visible; and right or left, doors leading to the kitchen and to the bed-chambers. Through the windows a portion of the Cathedral's lofty choir stands magical in the moonlight.

Gerhard, in dishevelled dress, is yearningly absorbed in his drawings by the rest. Gerda sits to the front centre, a book fallen from her, and with suppressed hatred of her surroundings written on her face. Ursula enters, as if habitually, and goes down to her.

Ursula. I have set wine and herrings on the table
That he may eat—the master—when he will.
The candles, too, are ready and the bread
And water against the morning.—Is there more?

Gerda (rising). There is no more.

[Ursula goes.

But ever is it thus!

Up with the dawn
For this housewifery
Of ordering a wan wench to and fro,
And then of bidding her to bed, where she
May still dream of her kettles and her kitchen,
Of broth and stew and pottage, in her sleep.

[Gerhard turns, she continues.

A woman is a hare shut in a warren,
A linnet in a cage—when she is wed so.

[*He rises.*

Night after night this dull and heavy house
In which you toil and I sit tortured by.

Gerhard (comes down). But Gerda—

Gerda. In a nunnery
were better.

Your tools scrape ever there upon the paper
From dusk to midnight,
And from dawn to dusk

You are away amid unwitted workmen
Gazing with love on every stone they lay.
But I bide here—bide—

In want, aye in want, tho nobly born,
Of the one thing—the merest that befits me.

Gerhard (gently). Yet well do you know why.

It is because

You ask me, Gerda, what I cannot give.

Gerda. And what, in giving not, are less a man.

[*He flushes.*

Yes, less than are these larded monks about us,
Who dare take arms, tho sworn to crucifixes.

[He controls himself and goes silently back to work. A pause.]

Gerda. Well, *some* there are who——

Gerhard. Yes, many who find

In bloody battles all their heart's desire.

Gerda. And what but battles saves our Father-
land?

Gerhard. Peace, Gerda, might.

Gerda. And weaklings without swords?

[When he does not answer.]

Am I to live . . . so . . . when there are
those

With whom might be an end of low-born dull-
ness?

[He only sighs.]

Would Rupert leave me to this weariness—

Rupert I might have wedded save for you?

Am I a burgher's daughter, chosen but

To spin the flax

And potter mid the pails,
That I am dealt with thus?

Gerhard (simply). You are my wife.

Gerda. The wife of master Gerhard, builder, of
Ryle!

Who left a castle and her father's care,
A banquet-board
Where in the evening glow
The minnesingers sang contending of love,
To wed a paltry dreamer! and who soon
No doubt will come contently to beguile
Her days—while he is wrapped away or lost
In his cathedral longings; aye, or gone
With mall and measure to the quarry-fields—
In driving geese to market!

Gerhard (rising again). Can you speak so?

[Coming down and pleading tenderly.]

I ask not anything of you at all—
Save that you be to me,
As first you seemed,
The sainted inspiration of my soul,

That seeks now to eternalize in stone,
In arches that shall spring like seraph-pinions
And spires piercing to sunward, as a song,
This church—a very mitre of Christ on earth!
I am not born of barons, like your father,
Or of a race
Of prelates like this bloody
And proud Archbishop who commands my
toil.

Why to your scutcheoned gates I one day came
I know not—I ennobled but by dreams.
And what led you to abjure the difference
Between our births and love me is yet darker;
While darkest is it what drew you to follow
My steps to this humility and loss.
But it is done, Gerda, and we are wed,
And if your love now finds
No valour-heights in the great shrine I build
To hold the bones of the Three Holy Kings
Drawn starrily to Christ in Bethlehem,
One thing abides—the love I gave you then.

Gerda. In name, but not in truth and life and passion.

Gerhard. Because you will it so.

Gerda (implacably). Because the serf
Who is my husband shuns to take the sword
Of knighthood which my father would gird on him
And turn from doltish tools.

Gerhard. To daily murder?
And plunder, like these lords who ply the Rhine?
[*As she turns on him.*

No, no, I mean it not—of him, your father.
[*More impassionedly.*

But I am not as they! and what I here
Am building is a greater thing to God,
Wherein all that I am must be transfused
Without blood-guilt
Or any sinfulness.
And you can aid this immortality,
This shrine soaring to touch infinitude—
And thro whose doors, with saints and martyrs set,
The millions of this German land shall move,

Past jewelled windows where fair Paradise
Shall be set forth in colours spread supernal,
To mass and vespers which shall purge their sin.
You, Gerda, you so beautiful, can aid.

Gerda. Yes, as may any stone with which you
build:

A sacrifice

Set in a selfish vision.

But I will not. My own way will I choose,
And it shall be—away from here.

Gerhard (now realizing). Away?

Gerda (seeing him torn at last).

With one who knows the sword's nobility,
And who will build me love, not stony churches;
One knowing a woman is flesh as well as spirit,
And that beauty is earth's as well as heaven's.

Gerhard. And he . . . that you will go
with . . . will be Rupert?

Gerda. He will be one at least who is aware
How vainly I am made . . . a mere midwife
[With a final thrust.

Unto a vision that is moon-begotten,
A fancy that but bats and owls shall finish—
And keep to worship in.

Gerhard (soul-struck). By which . . . you
mean . . .

That to my shrine
Some evil-veering wind
Has risen . . . which, hearing, you have kept
from me?
Some breath, perchance,
Of Rupert's poison tongue?
Rupert, who would strike God out of this land?

[A knock without.]

Gerda. Your answer stands there waiting at
the door.

*[Goes rigidly off as he moves to draw the latch.
But a knock of more violence comes, and,
shuddering back, he takes up the sword as if
fearing treachery. Then quickly opening the
door he finds Conrad—with several cloaked
forms that slip back into the shadow.]*

Conrad (with amazed irony on seeing Gerhard's sword).

By every nail of the Cross, what mood is this?

[Enters.

My holy builder bent on shedding blood
Like any baron of us? My believer
In peace without a sword set upon murder?
His tender tools forsook, and trceries?

[Laughs.

It is not ill, not ill! . . . no; as I live!
Who has two trades need never lack employ-
ment.

[Comes down.

And, sanctus, I am minded! . . . It will lighten
The purpose I have brought.

Gerhard (forebodingly). Christ save my soul.

*[Drops the sword with an abhorrence that causes
Conrad to flush.*

Conrad (whom a pause is not able to restrain).

I do not like aversions, Master Gerhard.

Within this land I am priest-militant:

Is my sword-bearing, too, an infamy?

[Finding vantage in this.]

So is it with these peace-fed artisans.

It sickens me;

Till, to the guts, I weary

Of this unslaked church-building.

For . . . wherefore

Should I, but for a dead man in his coffin,

Tho he was called my father

And laid on me

The pledge to build this fane up to the stars,

Spend all the guilders this arch-diocese

Can gather—I, engirt by fools and foes?

Rupert is right!

Gerhard (trembling). Rupert?

Conrad.

I will cease.

And if the Kings who rode to Bethlehem

Want for their bones a shrine, then let them send

To my electorate peace,

Or to my coffers

Mammon enough to quell my enemies.

Gerhard (whom a deadly pallor has stricken still).

You have come here to say the mighty fane
Which I am toiling for and which is yet
Not half to heaven——

Conrad. Must, by heaven, stay so;

[Prepares to go.

Tho to the land a Devil's Easter come.

Gerhard. And it is Rupert who persuades you
to it,

So there may be more money to shed blood?——

Too deep were such a shame.

Conrad (aflare). Master Gerhard!

Gerhard. Master am I of naught, save of my
hope.

High over me is your authority

And over all the thousands of this land.

[With solemn faith.

But this, if you should do——

Conrad (in wrath). Dragons of Hell!

Am I to drink fool's breath? Is this a Pope

Of very Rome to question my decrees!

Gerhard. No, but, my lord, I am the living voice
Of those unfinished arches that arise
Out of my window,
Under the pale moon,
To point toward eternity and light.
And even you
Who have compelled this city
And all the land about beneath your yoke,
Will dare not do this.

Conrad. Dare! . . . dare! . . . not
dare!

[*Chokes.*

This from a tool-bred hireling! . . . Soul of God!

Gerhard. It is God's soul, that cries into your ears,

[*With profound faith.*

And will not hush for mitre or for crown
Until it tells you
Who have ground the poor
And gathered widows' mites to waste on war—
Heavily on the people hanging chains
Which strangle past enduring—that if now—

Conrad (ragingly). May I go down to Hell and
there be set

The task of flaming damned souls with lust—

As one has flamed your wife, upstarting peasant—

[Gerhard cries out.

If you vent more of this. *(Calls.)* Rupert! In!

[As the door opens, to Rupert, entering.

This knave has spoken words of spotted treason!

Of treason! And his blood—if in so pale

A thing blood be—shall cool in prison for it.

[With worse thoughts, as Gerda enters.

Or no! The worm, the wan church-chaffing coward,
Shall see scorn of him even from his wife.

To—to her! Take her in your avid arms,

Unto your breast! With all the power I am

I give her you, and shrive the adultery.

Rupert. (Starts toward her). Gerda!

Gerhard. Oh! What am I driven to!

*Rupert (who pauses, laughing, as Gerda stands
motionless.)*

To seeing now what love and passion are!

Appeaseless passion—

Not for a carven saint,

Or for a painted angel without lips

And limbs and breasts where happy kisses hive,

But for a woman full of sweet response.

[Again starts toward her.

Gerhard (uncontrollably). Not Christ upon the
very Cross bore this.

*[He springs wildly at Rupert and seizes his
dagger. A struggle, a fall, a stab ensue; then
silence. Then slowly he rises with horror and
staggers back, till his hand striking the church-
plan tears it across.]*

*Conrad (who runs to the door, now with redoubled
wrath).*

In, in! Ho, in! Murder! murder!

Enter Soldiers alarmed.

Murder!

A Soldier (dazed). My lord, who? (*Looks
around.*) How? Sir Rupert dead? Here?

Conrad. Take him, I tell you.

Soldier (confused). Who, my lord? and
where?

Conrad. The murderer there of Ryle.

Soldier (amazed). Gerhard of Ryle?

[Gerhard stands staring at his deed.

Conrad. He who will shed no blood! who will
not fight

In battles, but who dips his soul in murder!

[The soldiers prepare fetters.

*Gerhard (stricken, aghast, with his eyes still fixed
on Rupert).*

The curse of Cain! the crimson curse of Cain!

In spite of all—at last! Its guilt upon

The glory I was dreaming . . . O upon——

[Sees the torn plan.

My shrine—— (*Moans.*)

Soldier. What shall be done with him, my
lord?

Gerhard. Each stone that I should lift would
now cry out

And every column crumble with wet blood.

[Bewildered.]

Yet I was set apart from violence

By such a vision as no man e'er had.

*[Again, after moans, with the weariness of one
lost.]*

Accursèd be my hand and shrivellèd up,

Accursèd all the weapons of the world

And all the hate

Whose cruelty has shaped

The guilty tools of rage and lust and ruin

That from the gates of Eden to this hour

Have smitten humankind with grief and death. . . .

And oh, accursèd be, lord of Cologne,

You, in whose desecrated heart the Dove

Of the Holy Spirit

Ne'er has beat its wings.

[They fetter him.]

Do with me now according to your will.

*Conrad (in whose stark face the soldiers seek
orders).*

Bear him up to a scaffold of his church
And let him—happen over. If he lives
The Devil's in him. If he dies it shall
Be held the Devil's doing—and not mine.
I do not think his tainted task will now
Be hurried to a feverous finishment.

[They lead Gerhard out, Gerda still standing motionless. Conrad with a glance of indifference at her follows. Then a shudder passes over Gerda, whose eyes are on the door; and as one against her will she slowly moves toward it. When there she trembles, listens, and then, looking up, falls back, stricken, from the sight, with a cry of horror. At the same time Ursula enters but stops frozen.]

CURTAIN

THE SHORE'S SONG TO THE SEA

Out on the rocks primeval,
The grey Maine rocks that slant and break to the
 sea,
With the bay and juniper round them,
And the leagues on leagues before them,
And the terns and gulls wheeling and crying, wheel-
 ing and crying over,
I sat heart-still and listened.

And first I could only hear the wind in my ears,
And the foam trying to fill the high rock-shallows.
And then, over the wind, over the whitely blossom-
 ing foam,
Low, low, like a lover's song beginning,
I heard the nuptial pleading of the old shore,
A pleading ever occultly growing louder:

*O sea, glad bride of me !
Born of the bright ether and given to wed me,
Given to glance, ever, for me, and gleam and dance in
the sun,
Come to my arms, come to my reaching arms,
That seem so still and unavailing to take you, and hold
you,
Yet never forget,
Never by day or night,
The hymeneal delights of your embracings.*

*Come, for the moon, my rival, shall not have you;
No, for tho twice daily afar he beckons and you go,
You, my bride, a little way back to meet him,
As if he once had been your lover, he, too, and again
enspelled you,
Soon, soon, I know it is only feigning !
For turning, playfully turning, tidally turning,
You rush foamingly, swiftly back to my arms !
And so would I have you rush; so rush now !
Come from the sands where you have stayed o'erlong,*

*Come from the reefs where you have wandered silent,
For ebbings are good, the restful ebbings of love,
But, oh, the bridal flowings of it are better !
And now I would have you loose again my tresses,
My locks rough and weedy, rough and brown and
brinily tangled,
But, oh, again as a bridegroom's, when your tide,
whispering in,
Lifts them up, pulsingly up with kisses !*

*Come with your veil thrown back, breaking to spray !
And oh, with plangent passion !
Come with your naked sweetness, salt and wholesome, to
my bosom,
Let not a cave or crevice of me miss you, or cranny,
For, oh, the nuptial joy you float into me,
The cooling ambient clasp of you, I have waited over-
long,
And I need to know again its marriage meaning !
For I think it is not alone to bring forth life, that I mate
you;*

*More than life is the beauty of life with love !
Plentiful are the children that you bear to me, the
 blossoms,
The fruits and all the creatures at your breast dewily
 fed,
But mating is troubled with a far higher meaning—
A hint of a consummation for all things.
Come utterly then,
Utterly to me come,
And let us surge together, clasped close, in infinite
 union,
Until we reach a transcendence of all birth, and all
 dying,
An ecstasy holding the universe blended—
Such ecstasy as is its ultimate Aim !*

So sang the shore, the long bay-scented shore,
Broken by many an isle, many an inlet bird-em-
 bosomed,
And the sea gave answer, bridally, tidally turning,
And leapt, radiant, into his rocky arms!

THE RUNAWAY

What are you doing, little day-moon,
Over the April hill?

What are you doing, up so soon,
Climbing the sky with silver shoon?
What are you doing at half-past noon,
Slipping along so still?

Are you so eager, the heights unwon,
That you cannot wait,
But, unheeding of wind and sun,
Out of your nest of night must run,
Up where the day is far from done,
Shy little shadow-mate?

Up and away then—with young mists
Tripping, along the blue!
Dance and dally and promise trysts
Unto each that around you lists;
For, little moon, not a one but wists
April's the time to woo!

THE VERSION OF SIMON THE SADDUCEE

Scribes and priests, hearken to me,
Simon am I, the Sadducee,
And, in spite of what I tell
Of a dead man made whole and well,
I say there is neither Heaven nor Hell.

Thus did it chance—and only so.
I was coming from Jericho,
And, when anear to Bethany,
Had crept under an olive tree,
Weary of heat and the Dead Sea.

And as I rested, nigh asleep,
I heard a sudden moan sweep,
And looking out from the olive-gloom
Bespread over a near hill tomb,
I saw a surging throng loom.

And out of the throng I heard a cry,
"Master, why did you let him die!"
From a lone woman's grief it came—
One of two that called his name—
And seemed to smite his heart as flame.

For tears were started in his breast,
Like waters from a fountain prest.
And lo, come to the tomb, he said,
In words that with sore yearning bled,
"Roll the stone away from the dead."

And swift they rolled its weight away,
As you have heard his people say.
And then he cried—I swear, thus—
In a voice flung as wind thro us,
"I bid you to come forth, Lazarus."

And slowly out of the grave there came,
Bound about—like one who's lame—

With clothes at the feet, and face, too,
This Lazarus—a mere Jew—
Who had been dead. . . . whole days thro!

And as he came a great awe fell—
Seeming to fold the earth as well.
Yet if the hill shook, I know not:
Tho such a strength, there begot,
Nigh left me as the wife of Lot.

But soon the throng cried out, "He lives!"
At which a little shiver he gives—
Then falls down at the Master's feet.
And the women running, glad and fleet,
Took from him the winding-sheet.

Then was rejoicing, far and near,
And thronging about, his tale to hear.
Yet, by the rod of Moses, all
Of moment still was to befall!
For he but stood there in his pall,

Till some at last cried, "Master, bid
Him tell us what in death he did.
For we would know of the Abyss—
Of Sheol coming after this—
Whether it be a pain or bliss!"

And the throng pressed closer, closer still,
When Lazarus shook, as if his will
Had scarcely yet from death come back.
And then he stood there, all a-lack,
Looking as one upon the rack.

But still the throng cried, "Bid him speak!"
Till He who raised the dead grew weak,
And a sweat broke out upon his brow—
A sweat of faltering, all allow,
Whether to bid the dead avow.

Yet, louder still, "Yea, let us know
What Heaven is, if there we go;

For we will believe what man hath seen."
They cried again: and he, grown lean,
Turned at last with a granting mien.

But then did Lazarus loose his lips,
As one whom a great loving grips,
And said, "Nay, Lord, send them away;
To you alone will I first say
What I have seen of Heaven this day."

So He unto them said, "Stand off:
Have I not shewn ye signs enough?"
And they obeyed, tho lothfully,
Murmuring backward from the tree,
Where those two stood alone with me.

Then was it that this Healer said,
"Speak!" and hope to his word was wed;
Such hope as never hung before
At the tomb's unrevealing door.
The very sun stood eager o'er.

And Lazarus stammered forth, "Dear Lord,
Shall I so pierce you with a sword?
In the four days of my death-gloom
I have but lain as in a womb:
Emptiness only has the tomb!"

And he, their "Lord" and "Master" called,
Paled to his heart, as if appalled.
But only a space, then beauty spread,
Strange as the power that raised the dead,
Over his limbs and lit his head.

And then He gently turned away
And to the throng I heard him say,
"Look on my face and search ye out
Whether of Heaven ye should doubt!"
And all cried "Nay, Lord," with a shout.

So I, Simon, the Sadducee,
Say still that Heaven nor Hell may be.
And yet if thus the dead arise
Who is there in his heart denies
That in this man a Prophet cries?

THE FAUN REPENTS

Spring seized me in the wood,
 Made of me a satyr:
Feet hoofed with hardihood,
 Heart a passion-crater.
Spring seized me in the wood—
 Oh, how I hate her!
For the nymph I love came by,
With a green wreath at her thigh.
“Were she Dian’s self,” said I,
 “Now would I mate her!”

So, lustily, I sprang
 Thro the leaves and took her;
Swept her with kisses, sang,
 No least word would brook her.

EARTH AND NEW EARTH

And, when, within the shade,
All but bliss forsook her,
Up with a remorseful cry,
Up she rose, with wreathen thigh,
Anger-pale, and fled: then I
Knew I had mistook her.

Now, loveless, do I go,
Loveless—and unmated.
Shamed by all nymphs I know,
By her shunned and hated.
Dance they amid the brake?
My arms go unsated!
Never sylvan-girded thigh
Swift against me glimmers by.
Evož ! how sad am I,
So befooled and fated!

Spring, Spring it was did this,
Spring the mad exalter!
Spring, with her wanton kiss,
Fire on the heart's altar.

Had I my nymph again

I would never palter

With such passion: no, not I,

Tho with wanting I should die!

But, sufficed, would let no sigh

For her from me falter.

IN THE DEEP MIDNIGHT

I

Clanging, ever clanging,
Clanging in the deep midnight, train-bells clanging!
Over the city sleeping,
Over the silent huddle of roofs and shadows,
Over the hearts of thousands, lying enchambered,
 breathing evenly,
Or breathing and tossing, to and fro, on torn seas of
 insomnia,
Clanging over the streets, restless clanging—
Over husht streets, with blue electric lights lone-
 somenely burning,
Over the steepled churches,
The shrines dark and empty save for the voiceless
 souls of Bibles,

Over the wan Hospital, the wards where the sick lie
waking a little,
And where they moan a little, not knowing why,
Over the Jail where the guilty, too, wake and stir in
their ward,
And where they start, with waging blood, and moan
and beat at their bars,
Because for them there is neither home nor high-
way,
Over that other prison, where the dead lie,
But wake not at all, nor struggle, nor beat at their
bars!
Ever, ever clanging!

II

O voiceful restlessness!
Vibrant soul of the world's coming and going,
Resonant want of it, restive vent of it, and of desire,
desire—
Desire to wander back to the peace of the known,
Or out and away to the anywhere of deliverance—

How many, a-dream, are caught in the net of your
ringing!

How many turn in their sleep and are caught away
to the sea's roaring,

Are caught away . . . over corn tossing, and
woods waving, and rivers,

Past the red-lit or the green-lit stations, clanging,
Away to the dark of the East or the dark of the West!

How many remember, far from mother or wife,
And wonder if there is waking, if there is waiting,
If there are tears falling for them in the darkness!
How many, under your quaver, under your clamor
and evocation,

See sudden again the far-a-ways of childhood,
Brought forth from the shadowy bournes of years
and grief and blind forgetting,

To merge again in the mists of sleep's immunizing!
How many, under your riot, under your plangence,
under your passion,

Ride again over cattle-wilds, again over buttes
and mesas,

Unlassoed still by Life, lords of its spaces, of its
pastures!

How many, mated with sin, disease and stagnance,
In dens, moonless and loveless, where the free sweet
winds would sicken,
Feel, as they hear, the nails of their souls' coffin,
Driven, driven, driven, driven in!

III

It passes, as all passes; there is silence.
The huddled roofs dream again in the shadows,
With the blue electric lights lonesomely burning, the
streets unbroken,
Night's immemorial opiate rules all.
And the stars come closer, beaten off no more by the
sound's urgency,
Intimate now, and ready with revelations, with
reachings,
For the sky has become the confessional of God,

And, Priest of the Universe, He hears its need—and
shrives it—

Till all the crying that was, now is comfort,
All want that was is peace . . . all clanging rest!

CHURCH BELLS HEARD IN THE COUNTRY

Soft to my ear
The Sunday bells
Come on the wind
Like whilom spells
That long have lost
Their pristine charm
To do my spirit help or harm.

And yet they haunt me
With a thought
Of years when faith
Came all unsought;
When youth was truth—
And nothing more
Did I demand, God to adore.

EARTH AND NEW EARTH

No marvel more.
For what had I
To do with doubt,
Having the sky.
Or why once pause
To ask or think,
Having the whole wide world to drink:

The world within
Whose cup was love—
A quaff of which
All things could prove;
Or make all questions
Of no worth,
Letting them never come to birth.

Yes, in the sound,
Then, of the bells
No world-wide woes
I heard, or knells.

Infinitudes
Of grief and wrong
Were yet dissolved within their song.

For Spring and love
And a girl's face
Can give God being
Thro all space.
Spring, love, and joy
In a lad's soul
Can make all rifts in heaven whole.

And yet the years
That broke the spell
Of Deity
Within a bell,
And made me ask,
Thro storms of thought,
Whether the world is God-enwrought;

That made me probe
Sin and despair
To see if faith
Can find Him there;
Are years yet nobler,
For, truth *now*
Is more than youth—is Life, somehow.

SONGS TO A. H. R.

I

SHELTER

I have been out where the winds are,
And tossing tops of trees,
And clouds that sweep from rim to rim
Of blue infinities.

And all was a sound and sway there, a surging of
unrest:

So now I am wanting silence, and the heart I love
best.

Yes, and a quiet book, too,
Of pensive poetry,
In which to let the lines lapse
Away, unlessonedly.

For I shall gather, somehow, from the soft fire's glow,
And from the eyes I love best, all I need to know.

And hours shall slip to embers,
And on the hearth lie;
And every wind that blew me,
And every want, die.

Then I shall take the hand I love best, and turn to
sleep.

And, if God wills, at dawn wake, again, to laugh or
weep.

II

DOMINIONS

Death is as strong as the sea is,
But when I lift my eyes
To yours I know there is born there
A light to outlive the skies.
Death is as wide as the sea is,
Yet at your least love-call
I know that death's vastity is
Not all.

Death is as dark as the tide is,
But when I see you move
I know that the highmost star there
Is guided in its groove.
Death is as dread as the tide is,
But while your heart is in mine
I'll trust that all else beside is
Divine.

III

ASSUAGEMENT

How close to-night the whippoorwill
Calls, as the stars come out;
And then how like a far echo—shrill
No more, but a dream-shout.
How softly there does the Infinite
Lift up the silver moon,
And then how silently He sets
Our care-sick hearts in tune.

How soothingly does the night-wind sigh,
And ease the earth to sleep.
How fugitive is the cricket's cry,
But, oh, with life how deep.
How vastly stretches the universe,
How lone and how aloof,
Until our hands touch—then it seems
But love's star-built roof.

IV

SECRESIES

What is between my heart and the moon
To you alone I tell,
In words soft as the trembling tone
That comes from the far buoy-bell.
What is between my heart and the sea
Can ne'er be told, or writ,
Because, like this my love for you,
Its strength seems infinite.

What is between my heart and the stars

 You need but ask to learn,

For all my clustered thoughts of you

 Like them with beauty burn.

What is between my heart and the deeps

 Of death could be confessed

Only when I have clasped you there

 Again unto my breast.

V

ON THE BEACH

The long coast curves and the cliffs rise up,

 Red and white and green,

The surf slips in with a sucking din

 Of shingle-wash between.

The light gulls float with their crimson bills

 Set seaward—not one cries:

And we are alone, alone with them,

 Under the aimless skies.

The tide slips in, of the moon released,
Its rhythm gives us rest,
And in its pause there are hid sweet awes
That sink into the breast
With silent soothing—till the coast
Is lost in mystic gloam,
And till deep in my dreams I hear
Your voice that calls me home.

VI

AT THE EBB-HOUR

As I hear, thro the midnight sighing,
The low ebb-tide withdrawn,
And gulls on the dark cliff crying
For far discernless dawn,
It seems that all life is lying
Within your every breath,
Yet I can not believe in dying,
Or death.

As I hear, from the gray church tower,
The bell's unfailing sound
Peal forth hour after hour
To night's lone reaches round,
It seems as if Time's wan power
Would sear all things apace—
All, save in my heart one flower,
Your face.

VII

THE EDGE OF THE HILL

If we walked over the edge of the hill
And on, should we reach the moon?
Silver it lies in the twilit skies
Just over the trees that croon
With the trembling breeze and the softened pleas
Of the whippoorwill's lone cry.
If we walked over the edge of the hill
And reached the moon, would the wefts of ill
Fade there, from love, and die?

If we walked over the edge of the hill
And on, should we reach the stars?
And God at the end, our final friend
In all time's troublous wars?
And then, at last, with the world far past,
Should we be satisfied?
Or long again for the edge of the hill
And love, so frailly human still,
And hopes that ne'er abide?

VIII

ALL

All of Spring in a bird's song,
Of Summer in a rose,
Of Autumn in one fallen leaf:
So the world goes.

So forever it goes, dear,
And so within one breast
I find my all of earth-joy,
And ease for unrest.

KING SOLOMON SINGS OF WOMEN

I have been lord and spouse to many women,
And sipped the honey of their lips and hair,
And found that in the end distaste was there,
Whether their beauty was of Jah or Rimmon.

Queens have I taken out of Set or Sheba,
And little handmaids with awestricken breath,
And breasted priestesses of Ashtoreth
Prouder than daughters of the kings of Reba.

And with them I have walked amid the vineyards,
And plucked the grape and poured the purple wine,
And listened as they swore their hearts were mine;
And knew their hearts were wanton weedy sin-yards.

Or I have dallied with them in the palace,
To plash of fountains in the pallid night.
Framed have I ever found them for delight,
But the souls of them dark as lairs of malice.

A thousand have I led in fair betrothal,
Berobed and ankleted and lapped in myrrh.
Yet not unsoothly have the priests of Hur
Assailed my house as but a bridal brothel.

For love is the anointing oil of passion,
And no king can a thousand times be crowned.
So in false oils have I too oft been drowned;
Or, loving not, have sinned, too, in my fashion.

Better it were that I had found one maiden
Clothed in a thousand veils of chastity
Than maids a thousand that all eyes could see
Were ready with my king's lust to be laden.

Better it were that I had sought for beauty
Wedded to wisdom in one breast and face.
For man, with such, can find a dwelling-place:
'Twixt many all his soul is tossed as booty.

For there is cavil ever at his curtain
And flesh-temptation ever in his sight.
By harlotry his strength is shorn each night.
Of but remorseful morrows is he certain.

Better it were some Ruth had crept all fearless
Into the threshing-floor of this, my heart—
Where chaff and grain seem never kept apart.
Had it been so, my pillow now were tearless.

And such an one, among the luring many,
I can remember, tall and straight and calm,
As rich in promised fruitage as the palm,
One to compare in wisdom-ways with any.

But to my chamber never with enticing
Came she—and should I call her, I, the King?
On such a wisp of vanity we swing
Away all that is sure for life's sufficing.

Now she is gone: nor know I how or whither.
But oft till day breaks and the shadows flee
I long to have her gaze again at me,
Like the young roe upon the mounts of Bether.

And thro the harem aimlessly I wander,
With loathing sense and soul no beauties please.
Better a hive of stinging sterile bees,
Or a housetop on which alone to ponder.

For e'er the childless and the child'd clamour
Each after gifts, up to the kingdom's crown.
And Pharaoh's daughter hears—wherefore the
frown
Of Egypt from her brow must I enamour.

Sick am I of their glances and embraces,
Sad am I of their bickerings and strife.
A thousand wives have I—and yet no wife,
A thousand hills, yet no heart-sheltered places.

Wherefore I say, Women are as pomegranates,
Tempting our taste that we may spread their seed
Over the earth: as at creation's need
God scattered o'er the sky His teeming planets.

Or that as aloes are they, fair and fragrant
At first, but ah, how bitter at the end.
Adam would be in Eden, and God's friend,
Had Eve not, at the Serpent's touch, turned vagrant.

There is a spreading tree that men call *elah*.
Would I could lie beneath it with that one
Whose heart would be as moon after the sun.
Instead comes night—and Pharaoh's daughter. *Selah*.

THE IMMORTAL

Spring has come up from the South again,
With soft mists in her hair,
And a warm wind in her mouth again,
And budding everywhere.

Spring has come up from the South again,
And her skies are azure fire,
And around her is the awakening
Of all the world's desire.

Spring has come up from the South again,
And dreams are in her eyes,
And music is in her mouth again
Of love, the never-wise.

Spring has come up from the South again,
And bird and flower and bee
Know that she is their life and joy—
And immortality!

VITA MIRABILIS

I watched a little pulse beat in my wrist,
A slender throb almost invisible,
And said: This thin small tide is richly full
Of all the world, and while it so keeps tryst
I shall not want for earth and sea and stars,
For the wide wonders of the infinite;
I can look thro a glass at atom-wars,
Or to far worlds in the faint ether lit.
I can list woodland litany of brooks,
See Spring bring up the flowers magicly
And fill them, in the long sun-scented hours,
With all the honeyed business of the bee.
I can see on the hot horizon's rim
Clouds built by genii of the coming storm
From whose high bright sierras, far and dim,
Fall the swift floods for summer's help or harm.
And, out with Autumn and the flying leaves,

Or with gray winds of winter icy-tressed,
I can behold how earth when weary weaves
The raiment of her sleep and lies to rest.

Yes, while this little tide shall ebb and flow,
From heart of me to heart of me again,
I can hear all the wild seas tell their woe
To all the wilder swaying souls of men.
Waves that have wintered in gray polar zones,
Or waves that lap palm-fronded tropic isles,
Where lotos beauty soon, how soon, atones
For all the dearth of hope's sad-stricken smiles,
I can descry; and oh, what marvels more,
Of mountains in their snowy mitres rising,
Of cities in mist-surplices set o'er
Pale sacred banks of rivers—or surprising
The sky with their high-stabbing strength and pride.
And deserts I can gaze on, stretching wide
With prescience of earth's universal death—
Deserts whereon no living thing draws breath—
Dun deserts; and how many things beside!

How many, ah! while beating, beating, beating,
Along my wrist this little stream is sent.
How many things swift-taken from the fleeting
Of day and night, and in its red vein pent.
The restive generations of the world
That rise and pass, the tragedies of nations,
To-day at peace, to-morrow blindly hurled
Into war-hurricanes and conflagrations;
The bravery of millions deathward bound,
The sorrowing of millions who survive;
The music of humanity near drowned,
Yet by faith's ceaseless fingers kept alive:
These, and how many more, of fear or love,
Amid life's fury or afar from it!
How many that must wound great God above,
Ere they are flung into oblivion's pit.
These can be mine, to thrill me or to grieve
Until a day when in my wasted wrist
This little tide shall fail to keep its tryst,
And, ebbing, but the worm and mystery leave.

AS THE TIDE COMES IN

The long-winged terns dart wild and dive,

As the tide comes tumbling in.

The calm rock-pools grow all alive,

With the tide tumbling in.

The crab that under the brown weed creeps,

And the snail who lies in his house and sleeps,

Awake and stir, as the plunging sweeps

Of the tide come tumbling in.

The driftwood swishes along the sand,

As the tide comes tumbling in.

With wreck and wrack from many a land,

On the tide, tumbling in.

About my feet are a broken spar,
A pale anemone's torn sea-star
And scattered scum of the waves' old war,
As the tide comes tumbling in.

And, oh, there is a stir at the heart of me,
As the tide comes tumbling in.
All life once more is a part of me,
As the tide tumbles in.
New hopes awaken beneath despair
And thoughts slip free of the sloth of care,
While beauty and love are everywhere—
As the tide comes tumbling in.

THE INQUEST

(As a Lover sees it)

Up with her, do, out of her bed,
Let her not rest, tho she is dead.
Dig and pick at her, spade and shovel,
Till you have reached her coffin-hovel:
Then with prying and probe and test
Hold your foul long-faced inquest.

See if she died of a hole in her skull
Or of a brain flushed overfull
Of fetid days; till she was weary
Of bearing breath grown mortal dreary.
See if her murderer was Life—
Or her own hand, sick of the strife.

Of her own hand, I say; or, fools!
Mine, if it be your itch so rules.
See if forsooth a blow did shatter
Her world—where nothing more could matter—
Or if it's meet to set the crime
Down once more to the score of Time.

See—see to it! strip her of rest,
Even within the cold earth's breast.
Then, at last, when query is sated,
Sit for a smoke, an hour belated;
For there is naught *you* need regret—
You . . . with your live women, yet.

POETIC EPIGRAMS

(After the fashion of the Japanese)

I

THE FIRST RAIN

The first rain on the grave
Of him I loved . . .
Soon the first grass will wave.

2

MISTS

The mists enfold the trees,
Lest the new buds
That came last night should freeze.

3

SEED-BALLS

From each pale sycamore
Seed-balls are flung—
To shade how many a door.

4

IN A CEMETERY AT NIGHT

Is it ghost-dreams that rise
Up from each grave—
Or only the fire-flies?

5

KINDRED

The butterfly and flower
Surely were made
By earth in the same hour.

6

THE LIGHTNING

The lightning seems a tongue,
Mad with the heat,
The summer has outflung.

7

FAITH

When in the wind they shake,
The flower-bells,
All hearts to worship wake.

8

THE AUTUMN MOON

Long since the moon has found
Nirvana's calm,
In her desireless round.

9

DRIPPINGS

The gutter drips and drips
As thro my heart
An age of sadness slips.

10

THE MARBLE CHRIST

That Christ upon a tomb,
How lonely there
He looks in the night-gloom.

11

SCRIPT

No word the wild geese cry,
But only write
In silence on the sky.

12

AT NIGHT

The wind seems like a prayer
Of earth to God,
Unanswered everywhere.

13

NOVEMBER LEAVES

In the least leaf of all
Death takes, I hear
The universes fall.

14

THE CROWS

All day the prescient crows
Have picked the fields . . .
And now how fast it snows!

15

BY ONE JUST DEAD

Tho but an hour has sped
He is as dumb
As one ten æons dead.

16

THE FROST

How flowerlike the frost!
Can winter be
Creative Summer's ghost?

18

LOST

The wild duck finds her way
Even at night:
Yet I cannot by day.

WINDS OF WAR

(England, July and August, 1914)

I

TO THE MASTERS OF EUROPE

(When the first war-clouds arose)

I

To you, O rulers, who in this mad hour
Still cling unto Alliance or Entente,
And urged by ghastly "Honour" soon will daunt
Innocent millions with death's awful power;
To you, high masters, who will not betray
Your oaths that are a crime against the world,
Though now you see the flag of Hell unfurled
In the wild hands of War, to you I say:

Who gave you right to pledge your people's blood,
Or pawn their souls to serve an Ally's sin?
Or having pledged peace down to let rush in
From land to stricken land red slaughter's flood?
Who gave it, who? Your god of Self-Defence?
A lie! Pride is your lord, and Insolence!

2

You have built ships and armies with the bread
That should have driven hunger from the land;
You have mined seas and armed the mountains—
grand
In all; till lo, pausing to gaze ahead,
And seeing there the equal legions ride
Of foes who, too, are forward for defence,
Fear seizes you, a sudden terror's sense
Of dwelling calm such awful might beside.
So in a panic moment "War!" you cry,
And cataclysmic war almost is come;
There's heard the beating of destruction's drum—

Which you alone may stay, who sit on high.
So rise and break the treaties you have sworn,
Lest faithful you may bring all faith to scorn.

3

Arise and break them, then count naught a crime
Or cowardice but holding all dispute,
Of peril to the millions whom you loot,
From arbitration's fiat for all time.
For no more by the bloody lips of War
Is justice spoken; nor from starving lands
Is true gain gotten by its ghoulish hands,
Or manhood by its desolating mar.
But training thus your dark death-dealing hate,
Foe against foe, with awful enginry,
Shall slay the angel of humanity,
Whose wings at last were leaning to earth's gate.
So rise, or you shall ever be accurst
As of all godless murderers the worst.

II

IN THE TOILS

(London during the Crisis)

I

THE FUSE

A Murder, an Ultimatum,
A Question, a Reply:
The murmur of rising Russia—
Then peace struck down to die.

For Slav and Frank and Teuton
Are kindled; and the fuse
Is laid to the heart of England:
Can *she* to quench it choose?

2

WAR

The great clock in Westminster
Beats on or muffled chimes,
As it has done in war or peace
Before, unnumbered times.

The moon, behind its tower,
That rose ere England was,
Knows not the bloody die is cast,
But only Nature's laws.

3

MOBILIZATION

All night there come the cries
Acclaiming new recruits;
All night the turgid tramp
Of battle-shodden boots.

And well, ah, well we know
That ere the year shall pass
Their restless lips and restless feet
Shall rest—beneath the grass.

III

THE DEAD

(On the Battlefields)

I

Shovel them under the earth,
The innumerable dead,
And then on with the mirth
Of singing, stinging lead.

Shovel them under the earth,
Their hearts that held the stars
Shall wage now with the witless worm
No unappeasable wars.

2

Shovel them under the earth:

Aye, tho they might have borne
If left to home and peace and toil
Humanity's new morn.

Shovel them under the earth,

And with them the great wage
Of vast achievement that is lost.
Our children's heritage.

3

For here were curious brains,
Thro which accursèd lead
Struck wantonly—on dreams that held
The future—left them dead.

Or, furiously and blind,
Against a forehead hurled
Put out in silence what had been
Great music for the world.

4

Great music—now but dust.

Oh, here is such a waste
As not the hiving centuries
May hope to see replaced.

So shovel them under the earth,
Within a sodden trench.
Our children now shall have of them
But this—a little stench.

IV

THE PRAYERS OF THE WARRING NATIONS

. . . . "neither shall there be war any more."

Now, God in Heaven, you surely hear
Your noble Christian nations?
Two thousand years they have held you dear
And poured you out libations.

Your shrines have run with ruddy Crusades
And Inquisition-brine,
But now there is poured for your delight
A redder spilth of wine.

That first small voice is Servia's, pushed
To front by mother Russia,
Who kneels—on a million peasants crushed—
To keep your ear from Prussia:
“*Dear God,*” it says, as a good Slav should,
“*I made brave war last year:*
I slaughtered the Turk, a Christian work,
So now I pray you hear:

“*My sister Austria sits on a throne*
That's bitten from my borders.
A thief is she, a dog with a bone
That's mine, by Nature's orders.
I pray you then, by the Cross you love,
Of Petrograd, not Rome,
Join with us to rend her, root and stem,
To raze her, heart and home!

"Join with us to rend her!" . . . Ay God, grant

A prayer so high of beauty!

Yet not till Austria there shall pant

One equal in Christ-duty.

"I have been patient, Lord," it comes,

With Serbia's jealousy.

Now let me lash her peoples till,

They learn thou lovest me!

"Now let me lash them!" . . . God of men! . . .

Yet stay: there's Russia's murmur,

"If Serbia's lashed, O Lord, why then

My right must be the firmer.

For Austria prays with Teuton tongue,

Whose purpose is to seize

The little peoples whom Thou hast set

To cushion my poor knees.

"So, Lord, for the worshipping and praise

That to you I have given,

Beseech you tear the Teuton, craze

His land, let it be riven!

*Use for this glorious deed my horde
Of Cossacks, from the wild,
Till stands naught Prussian to the sun,
No man to maid or child!"*

Aye Lord, "naught Prussian," for your fane
Of earth will then ring rapture,
As rivers of blood and tears and pain
Your altars quickly capture.
But what? the Teuton is near, to seize
Your heart with Rhenish prayer?
To flame in its stead another up
Into your heaven's air?

And France is loud, and England, too,
Your holy aid beseeching?
Unnumbered millions, all Christ-true,
Their hands to heaven upreaching?
And craving, each, that their enemies
May fall by fire and sword,
By famine and fate and pestilence
And all hell's murder-horde?

O God in Heaven, you surely hear
Your noble righteous nations?
Two thousand years they have held you dear,
And now they pour libations
Of blood, with the tears of wife and babe,
And on your altars burn
All civilization's frankincense:
Lord, lean to each in turn.

V

GOD OR CHAOS

*(Westminster Abbey, during the siege of Liège, August,
1914)*

To-day all music
And worship are vain,
The vast holy beauty
Around me, pain.

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EARTH AND NEW EARTH

The high worn windows,
The arches that rise,
The great dead at rest here
Draw tears to my eyes.

For is it not useless,
The race men run?
The Hell-blood of battle
And that of God's Son?

Are poets and prophets
Who die for high dreams
Not dupes of a Being
That soullessly streams?

Or, unto its Purpose,
If purpose there be,
Are men as amœbæ
To that of the sea?

Swarm they thro the ages,
Like vermin, to die?
Have they no true reason
For living soul-high?

None? even to better
Their kind, till a day
When life for the living
Shall seem good alway?

When *earth* shall be heaven?—
Alas, there is death,
Whose certain impending
Can poison all breath!

Whose silence and shadow—
And opening tomb—
Shall ever surround us
With anguish and gloom! . . .

EARTH AND NEW EARTH

And if the earth rages,
Immense in its crime,
And bleeds as if blotting
Thy Face from all time,

Yet must we unshaken
Remember Thou art,
Not fear that blind chaos
Is lord of life's heart.

FATHER MERAN

(During the Belgian war-famine)

They come at night, the thoughts I hide,
And pluck like ghouls at my dead faith,
Crying that God, who lets war be,
Is but a phantom, but a wraith.
They come, as do uncounted faces
Out of the cold and corpse-strewn places . . .
Till I arise and by the pyx
Lay off my peaceless crucifix.

For in the church have I to sleep.
Elsewhere too many starving lips
Strain at me—strain, until it seems
My soul will madden to eclipse.

But in the church the Virgin only
Has her one Babe to nourish, lonely:
And with the crucifix laid by
I can escape their hunger-cry.

Escape, unless, ere I lie down
A knock comes at the chantry door
To bid me out and shrive the souls
Of shattered men—a thousand more.
Shrive, with a faith that's dead, the dying;
To them of Christ and Heaven lying;
Holding to each a tortured Cross
Against his soul's eternal loss.

O that I could believe again!
I would go down to Hell for just
A year of faith that earth and sky
Are more than blood and death—and dust.
In its abyss of fire and moaning
Willingly would I lie atoning
Even for those who struck Christ's Star
From heaven with this Demon war.

THE NEW PATRIOT

Within his heart East shall be one
With West, and his effaceless thought
Shall be that earth was made for all
Its driven millions sore-distraught.

For he at last shall look and see
Through all the creeds about him hurled,
His nation is humanity,
His country is the world.

THE SONG OF THE HOMESICK GAEL

*(In the characteristic minor of a recent literary
movement)*

I long to see the solan-geese
 Wing over Ailsa crag
At dusk again—or Girvan gulls at dawn;
To see the osprey grayly glide
 The winds of Kamasail:
For grayness now my heart is set upon.

The grayness of sea-spaces where
 There's loneliness alone,
Save for the wings that sweep it with unrest,
Save for the hunger-cries that sound
 And die into a moan,
Save for the moaning hunger in my breast.

For grayness is the hue of all

 In life that is not lies.

A thousand years of tears are in my heart,

And only in their mystery

 Can I be truly wise:

From light and laughter follies only start.

I long to see the mists again

 Above the tumbling tide

Of Ailsa, at the coming of the night.

There's weariness and emptiness

 And soul unsatisfied

Forever in the places of delight.

A DEVON RIDE

I sped like the wind over Woodbury Common,
The heath spread purple, the hills hung clear,
The sky was a-swim with silver and salmon,
The sea shouted up to me salty cheer.

I sped like the wind, for joy was upon me,
The glory of being, the sting of great earth,
The throb that has ever divinely drawn me
To think the whole world is a smile of mirth.

I sped like the wind. How green was the bracken!
The lift of it, drift of it, swing of it, sway!
O sunnily glad could I feel God slacken
His heart-strings, too, in a tide of play!

A SIDMOUTH LAD

Salcombe Hill and four hills more
Lie to leftward of this shore.
On the right Peak Hill arises
Ever rises, sick'ning, o'er.

Two score rotting years I've seen
Sidmouth sit those hills between:
Only Sidmouth—and twice over
Must I bide it, as I've been.

Then a churchyard hole for me,
By the dull voice of the sea.
Rotting, still in Sidmouth rotting,
Rotting to eternity.

WIDOWED

One wild gull on a wilder storm,
Winging to keep her lone heart warm.
One wild gull by the surf—and I,
Beaten by wind and rain and sky.

One wild gull in the offing lost,
Wilder heart in my bosom tost.
One wild gull—O why but one!
Two, dear God, should there be—or none!

THE LARGER LOSS

Far up to a moor above the sea
I climbed—and took one thought with me.

But gazing thence, over sea and moor,
I flung thought off as a thing impure.

For God loves moor and sea and wind,
But thought is a shift of men who've sinned.

And who no more with the sea and sky
Can live, but they must question Why.

Must ever question till the earth
Has lost the wild joy of its worth.

And that is loss all loss above—
In Reason to forget to love.

RE-RECKONING

Two years have gone, and again I stand
On the bow of a mighty ship
That pushes her way 'twixt sea and stars
With soft and dreamy dip.
Two years of labouring, heart and hand,
Of waging spirit-wars,
Of wondering ever what life is—
And if death heals its scars.

Two years; and again the mast-bell sounds
Above me—with a low voice,
As ghostly as the white phosphor-foam
That breaks with the old noise
Of waters that have washed all bounds
Of earth, that is man's home—
His ark—on the wide ether flung,
Unrestingly to roam.

For, even as we, is this our earth

An endless wanderer

Far down a universe with vast

Strange voyagings astir;

And where time ever brings to birth

A craving, never past,

To fare from where we are, to where

No anchor e'er was cast.

A craving—in the mote, the man,

The mollusc and the star;

A yearning on—O life! O life!

How far leads it, how far?

All unbelievably began

Thy voyage, mid a strange strife—

That, meaningless, yet seems to mean

It is with Wisdom rife.

But if it is not, shall we say,

“Let man scuttle his ship,

And drown in universal death

The griefs that at him grip?”

No; for no surety rests therein

To certain end of breath.

He can but let hope set the course

His soul foretokeneth.

LAST LINES OF THE POET OF SUMA

(Japan)

A broken bell
Under a rent thatch tower
Beside a ruined temple
Of Suma Mountain.
To it each hour
The mist comes like a priest
But cannot sound it.
Ever anear I dwell.

For so my heart,
Broken by age and sadness
And twined about with ruin
And death is hanging.

And if dim gladness
Comes like a silent wraith
And seeks to sound it,
Only the tears start.

ORIGINS

Such beauty cannot be by chance,
The mere chance of an atom-dance.
The fair shape of yon soft sea-moon
Was never by mere hazard hewn.

That star which beams its lovely way
Into my heart has more to say
Than ever by Fortuity
Was lent to moon or star or sea.

So if moons bide, or pass away,
If not a star in heaven shall stay,
If like all things I, too, am spent,
It will not be by accident.

THE BRIDE OF ŌITA

(*Japan*)

A single sampan sail: one sail, beating there, on the
blind sea: means more than the eight million gods
and Buddhas can to me!

For it is bringing home my lord, out of the storm!
. . . . To the gods I kneel . . . *Namu* . . . !
. . . . But love, and love alone, my heart can
warm!

A single sampan sail! . . . Will it soon fold to
rest its weary wing? . . . How wide then, ah,
how wide, my shoji door will swing!

THE IMMANENT GOD

(As a Sceptic sees Him)

See your God in the jelly-fish,
Sucking salty food.

See Him drift in the gulf-weed,
In shark-bellies brood.

See Him feed with the gull there,
In a gray ship's wake.

Feel Him afresh
In your own hot flesh
When into lust you break.

Hear His wrath in the hurricane,
Hushing a hundred lives.
Hear His heave in the earthquake,
In volcano hives.

EARTH AND NEW EARTH

Hark His stride in the plague-wind,
Over a sterile shore.
Down in a mine,
Behold what wine
Of coal-damp He will pour.

Aye, and there in the ribaldry
Of a night-wench's song
Hear Him—or on a child's lips
Cursing a slum-mate's wrong.
Stark He starves in the street there,
Or, full-fed, will go:
He, your God,
In every clod
Or clot of human woe.

And—in every infamy
Loathed by you with shame.
Clear of the saddest soul-stench
None can keep His name.

Man's, you may say, all crime is,
But Who gave man birth?
Spawn of the years
Is he—with tears
And strife to give him worth.

Spawn of the Universes,
God's great flesh and bone.
Stars are the cells that float there,
Thro lymph-ether strown.
Dying, living, and dead there,
Coming again to birth
Out of a Womb
That was their Tomb
Are they—and 'is out earth.

Such is your Immanent God—yea,
Evil as well as good,
Vileness even as beauty
Holds His strange Godhood.

Great He seems in the sea's surge,
Fair in a woman's face,
Yet with the worm
He feeds a term
On every goodly grace.

Spirit, then, you may hold Him,
High of plan and hope.
But world-flesh does He strive with,
Yearn like us—and grope;
So must ever and oft seem
Avid to escape
From the hid yeast
That moulds the least
Of all things to His shape.

Spirit, may be—or haply
We had known no growth,
But in a slime primeval
Still would dwell in sloth.

Yet if such is His Being,

Finite is His need.

To the same ends

As earth He wends

And journeying must bleed.

OCEAN OF NIGHT

Wash me again, ocean of night,
Clean of the cares of day.
For I am soiled, in heart and sight,
By the fume and fret and fray
Of the griefs of men and the wrongs of men
And the sins of men who stray.
Bathe me, O night, and lift and lave me—
Let no assoiling stay.

Wash me again, cleanser of care,
Then let the winds of sleep
Over me blow, with opiate air,
And all my spirit steep.
From the heart of earth and the heart of space
And the heart of God let sweep
Healing, O night—a strong tide, stealing
Into my soul's last deep.

HONGKONG CITY AT NIGHT

Across the harbour, shining gray, you gleam, a
myriad lights,

As if fond heaven had emptied all its stars,
To fill your lap, and on your brow and mountain
breast the spray

To spread, O city of enchanted nights!

Dim ships at anchor round you, too, have caught the
shimmering shower,

And cast long meteor gleams across the tide—
Where dark-winged junks, that flit about, like
strange sea-bats, but strew

Your beauty with a more mysterious power.

I sail away; and wanly do you vanish from my eyes,
But in the magic voids of memory
You are enchantress still, a starry city from the skies,
Upon the phosphor fringes of the sea.

A WIFE

In holy wedlock—maid and man—
We stood; then yearningly I ran
Into his arms—and hell began.

He kissed me for a week, caresst
My body, throat and brow and breast:
Then of his weariness confest.

And turned to others who had been
Old partners of his passion's sin—
Or whom it were mere boast to win.

For women are to him but flesh
To serve and satisfy afresh
The lusts that thro him throb and thresh.

And I am but one of them—who
Am bound to him a whole life thro:
One whom he scarce has need to woo.

For well he knows that till I die
I must be at his bidding by. . . .
What wanton is so low as I?

BEACONS

Like a spirit spark from the heart of God
The coast-light flashes over the sea,
Then leaves it wandering, wild and dark—
As if light never more could be.

And so it is with the spark of faith
In every sad and wandering heart.
It goes—as if forever: then
All deathless up again will start.

THE LIVING BUDDHA

(Peking)

I saw the living Buddha come,
Not to the beat of gong or drum,
Not to the breath of hymn or hum
Of prayers,
But in a yellow Mongol cart,
Drawn by the oxen set apart
For such perfection, thro long art
And cares.

Around him yellow lamas sat,
Ivory lean or sleek and fat,
Each on a silken broidered mat,
Unheeding.

And he amid them rode as calm
As if it were Nirvana, from
Whose peace he heard a mystic "Om"
Proceeding.

"What," said I, "this is Buddhahood?
All the world's evil and its good
This thick-lipped youth has understood—
None better?
Knows *he* the only way that peace
May come to us, and full release
From all Desire's futilities
That fetter?

"Yea, and that Time is but a Stream
Got of Illusion's lustful dream?
That worth and glory do but *seem*,
To sages?
O can it be that throngs—a third
Of earth's all hold that fatal word?
Have by it to retreat been stirred
For ages?"

The thought struck sudden thro my heart—

As an assuageless pity-dart.

I closed my eyes to crowd and cart

And pondered

How long such nations must have lain

Numb with despair and heavy pain

Ere to this creed, with life-trust slain,

They wandered.

FROM A NORTHERN BEACH

Is it because for a million years
The tide has entered here
From cold north seas
Where ice-floes freeze
That ever unto my ear
Primordial liveness in its voice
Comes telling of that time
When life was not, upon the earth,
But only glacier-rime?

Is it because these granite rocks
I share with weed and scurf
Were held so long
By the ice-throng

EARTH AND NEW EARTH

That now they take the surf
So selflessly and soullessly
As if God's Immanence
Had been pressed from them, never more
To enter, with sweet sense?

And is it because I, too, evolved
From ice and sea and shore,
Can understand
How life has spanned .
The lifeless ages o'er,
That as I sit here, suddenly
The tide again seems stilled
And earth beneath a great white pall
Again lies changed and chilled?

So it must be—ah, so; for soft
Within my muted brain
The heritage
Of age on age
Reverberates again.

Wherefore when glacial Silence comes
With Death I shall emerge
From that as from the frozen Past,
Under Life's endless urge.

TREES AND GRASS

Whoever will may have the flowers,
 Mine are the trees and grass!
Scent there may be in the blossom-bowers,
 But, oh, when the breezes pass
Thro purling leafy tops of the trees
 That ripple against the sky,
Their murmuring makes it good to live,
To take whatever life has to give;
 And good, at last, to die.

Whoever will may have the flowers—
 Lily or wilding rose.
Common the grass may seem in hours
 Enspelled by love of those.

But, oh, the flowers are little of earth,

The green grass covers it all—

A couch to be for my head to-day,

And, when to-morrow I'm gone away,

A cool clean winding-pall.

Whoever will may have the flowers,

Mine are the trees and grass.

Beautiful care on the one earth dowers,

But, oh, what peace can pass

Thro the blood and breath and heart and mind—

And into the soul of me,

When I lie down with the grass and trees,

And know God never needs strive for these,

But merely lets them *be!*

ZÊBI

She asked—and I gave her—a “lira.”

The name that she bore was Zêbi.

Her eyes, of a Raphael's era,

Found bliss in a fondled baby.

She said she had worn the city

In search of her lover, Gian!

Stabbing my heart with pity,

So little she was and wan.

He had gone, she said, “And, Signore,

Baby was yet to come!”

The immemorial story—

Of woman's fate the sum!

Pitiless there he had left her
To struggle, or starve, for bread.
But she loved him, tho he bereft her—
And should, till he was dead.

“And he went with a signorina?”—
“At the merest wave of a glove!
They called her ‘la Scarlattina,’
She burned men so with love.”

“And why,” I muttered to Heaven,
“Does God make such as he!
Slaves unto lust, and the leaven
Of lust, their cruelty!”

At which with a wise vainglory
She said, this sad little Zèbi,
“I think I can tell, signore:
God made him to give me baby!”

DURING A LONG CALM

Great God, is this the tameless sea, that oft
Has plunged with foamy hoofs along the shore
And stamped the streaming sands with such a roar
As made the startled cliffs stand stark aloft?
Is this the reinless sea, that when it will
Can paw all things that ride it down to death,
And breathe into the air a blinding chill
Of fog in which they sense destruction's breath?

Why, like a calmly pasturing thing it creeps
With softly lapping tongue along the beach,
And soundless to its farthest shining reach
It lies, in sunny idleness, and sleeps.

Is this—is *this* the sea, so sleekly bared,
So passionless, so pallid, and so null?
Then never has my heart that I have dared
To liken to it lain in sloth so dull.

EVENING WATERS

Evening waters softly gleaming
 Where the far sun is gone to rest,
 Gray and gold around me streaming,
 Like a tidal palimpsest
 On which God is ever writing
 Thro the night and thro the day
 Mysteries no heart can fathom—
 Words that fade in wind away;

Evening waters, softly flowing,
 In a little while the stars
 Will He bosom, faintly glowing,
 In your deeps, like avatars
 Of His thoughts that first were scattered
 Fulgent thro infinity—
 Whose profundity eternal
 Somehow tells us it is He.

IN A PARK PAVILION

Yesterday, where I am sitting,
A young girl sat and said,
"Naught am I to the living,
I will go to the dead."
Wind and bird around were flitting,
April thro the air
Flung the buds a million kisses—
From the sky's blue sweet abysses:
But *she*, numb to all its blisses,
Blew her brains out there.

All the world's wide-springing beauty,
All the wood's glad dew,
Hung about her heavy
With despair's sick hue.

Dregs, to her, but dregs, was duty;
Past and future hung
Like blind curtains that her craving
Could not pierce, to any saving:
Useless seemed it to be braving
Breath so sorrow-wrung.

So she pressed a fated finger—
And the earth went out;
Swept from her forever
By a bullet's flout.
For she cared not still to linger
In its April song;
But, thro clotted blood, her spirit
Sent to God, and bade Him fear it—
If He had not sought to hear it,
And annul its wrong.

There is much space in the heavens,
Space to lose God in,
If we hold as guilty
The sinner, not the sin.

Every crime has many leavens
Causing it to rise
From the deeps of human passion—
Where *she* felt the long years fashion
Fate for her—she who now ashen
And self-ended lies.

Yet, 'tis certain that creation
Has its Freedom, too,
Welling up forever
Thro life's fate, and thro;
That despair and degradation,
Unto such as she,
Cannot disavow the springing
Of new inner strength e'er bringing
Aid to us, despite fate's wringing.
Peace, and let her be.

THE FISHING

I baited my hook with a thought of God
And cast it out on the tides of Space
And said I will catch life's mystery,
Where the great star-wonders race.
It sank like a plummet, past the deeps
Of Vega and vast Aldebaran;
But ever the mystery I caught
Was shaped as the heart of man.

Then, "Lo," said I, "there is law in this!"
And, baiting my hook with a thought of men,
I cast it out on the infinite
Of star-foamed space again,
And soon there was strain at the hither end,
A thrill of things beyond earth's clod,
And swift there came to the heart of me
The mystery of God.

ABEYANCE

I heard the Autumn leaves drop thro the moonlight
And sink upon the ground.

I heard the wind flit by, a cricket cry,
And then no sound.

But even in the pale sheen of the distance
Hung the year's death.

Earth's heart at last had lost all sweet insistence
On breath.

I wondered at the wan ways of the planets,
At moon and misty star,

At the fair feet of Spring now wandering
Somewhere afar;

And vain was all belief that she, with tidal
Remembrance rife,

Could turn again, to bring earth, wintry-idle,
New life.

OLD AGE AND AUTUMN

Drifting leaves
And searing sheaves
In a world of silence and solitudes;
A world grown weak
And Autumn-meek,
Thro the wide-garnered fields and woods;
A world where the spider silent weaves
A shroud for seeds that have fallen low.
Drifting leaves
And searing sheaves,
And the caw of a crow.

Drifting leaves
And searing sheaves,
And a heart forgetful overmuch;
A heart grown old
To wind and wold,

No longer thrilled with Nature's touch;

A heart so weary that torpor weaves

Its shroud—for so all things must go;

Drifting leaves . . .

And searing sheaves . . .

And the caw of a crow.

A LOVER, REJECTED

Some day you will love:
Then there will be no more for you
Sun, moon, earth, star,
Or any certain thing;
But only one want,
Like mine, without shore, for you—
Infinite, vast and aching,
Dread yet divine.

Yes, you will love,
And yearning then will shake, for you,
Pride, hope, tranquillity,
And all you counted dear.
For this law stands—
Its chain shall never break for you:
Who laughs at love lightly
Lives to love with pain.

A LITANY FOR LATTER-DAY MYSTICS

Out of the Vastness that is God
I summon the power to heal me.
It comes, with peace ineffable
And patience, to anneal me.
Ajar I set my soul-doors
Toward unbounded Life
And let the infinitudes of it
Flow thro me, vigour-rife.

Out of the Vastness that is God
I summon the power to still me.
It comes from inner deeps, divine
With destinies that thrill me.

It follows the hush of every wrong;
And every vain unrest
It banishes; and leaves a bliss
Before all unpossest.

Out of the Vastness that is God
I summon the strength to keep me,
And from all fleshly fears that fret
With spirit-winds to sweep me.
I summon the faith that puts to flight
All impotence and ills,
And that, thro the wide universe,
Well-being's breath distills.

GOD, TO MEN

When I compass earth with winds,
Or array its loins with cloud,
When I draw its tides to the moon,
Or cover it with night's shroud,
When I tether it to the sun,
And the sun to a million more,
Do you think I have done as much as I do
When I open a least soul-door?

When I bid wild comets spring
Thro uttermost space, at play,
Or gather the nebulæ up
And fashion the Milky Way,

When I call, from the Never-seen,
Spring's mystery thro the sod,
Do you think I rejoice as much as I do
At your murmur, "It is God"?

Nay!—So, when I win, at last,
To an Immanence complete,
And thro star-world or soul
Can assert my least heart-beat,
Do you think that a terror still
Shall astringe your liberty?
Not so; you shall share, thro the Universe,
Full masterdom with Me.

ULTIMATES

If Autumn came to the universe
And the worlds like dead leaves fell,
If Time lay dumb in the boundless hearse
Of Space—an ended spell;
If this had chanced—as chance it may—
We still should be a part
Of all that dwells in the Abyss,
Or dreams within God's heart.

Of dust or dreams: till circling Life
Again should re-create
Sun, moon, and star with the old strife
Of their accustomed fate.
And, in a new birth, doubtless we,
Once more a-quest, should cry
For beauty all too rarely breathed,
And love less prone to die.

ARMS

Two weapons only has the universe

Against unvanquished man:

Fate, whose foreorderings none may rehearse,

Fear, that attacks his heart whene'er it can.

Two weapons has Godlike and dauntless man

Against the universe:

Laughter, that limits evil to a span,

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